

Life Support Contracts are set up and managed by MOD but there is no MOD rep to monitor them locally except for an army officer. In some cases this has led to corruption, in other cases it has allowed local vendors to operate with no quality control.

OVERALL SENTIMENT OF THE IRAQI PEOPLE

Generally the people of Iraq are appreciative of the United States, want our Military to stay as long as possible to ensure their safety and security.

Some portions of the population are happy that we can provide for their safety and are grateful that we ousted Saddam. But they will be equally as happy when we leave. This is more of an Arab cultural thing. Arab culture is driven by pride and shame. These people might be embarrassed that they could not secure their freedoms themselves and now would like us to leave so they can take over from here. And some simply don't want Westerners controlling their future.

When we traveled to various villages we were typically well received. Kids run out to the convoy in hopes that they'll get candy or water. Village leaders come out to greet us and invite us in to sit and talk while we drink Chai. When we entered a village and people looked away or closed their doors to us, it almost always meant that they were being intimidated by the terrorists. It was these villages that we spent more time. We'd come back as often as possible, bringing clothes, food, and commanders of all levels from the Iraqi Army and the Coalition to meet with tribal leadership. When we caught Saddam Hussein, there were celebrations at every village we went to. People were both relieved and overjoyed. And they thanked us in whatever way they could. When U.S. forces killed Abu Musab Zarqawi, people celebrated in the streets firing their guns in the air, they offered us food and gifts when we visited villages. These were true inspiring patriotic moments for Iraq.

When a suicide bomber attacks an Army or Police recruiting station and kills many people, the following day the lines waiting to join up are 3-4 times larger. People are looking for jobs and they see joining the Iraqi Security Forces as a great opportunity to make a living and do their part in getting rid of the terrorism rampant in their region of the world.

We are seeing lots of economic expansion everywhere. Strip malls are being constructed, businesses are expanding and franchises are popping up. New homes are being constructed all over the country. And people are spending money, looking for new types of goods to buy and they desire goods and services that are currently available throughout the rest of the world. Satellite TV has been a big help with this.

OBSTACLES

Fuel—Currently fuel is a major crisis not only for the Iraqi Security Forces but for the general population as well. The issue is not for a lack of oil, but a lack of functioning refineries—2 shut down in November. It has started to limit the ability of the Iraqi Security Forces to conduct long-range operations.

Border Crossings—Foreign Fighters and Terrorist support still continues to flow across the Syrian Border. Smuggling of fuel, cigarettes and other goods is commonplace and put a big strain on the ability of the Border Police to shut down the border. Lack of fuel has reduced the number of border patrols that are conducted. Long lines at the Point of Entry have caused many people to come across illegally. Some smuggling is being conducted as a direct support mechanism for terrorists.

Corruption: Very problematic in all areas of the Iraqi Security Forces. But it is also

misunderstood. Some levels of corruption are generally accepted in Arab culture. It is the way they have done business and government for so long that they have come to allow it—to an extent. Some of the areas of corruption that we've seen are when soldiers or police at checkpoints or border crossings do not check cars as they come through. They will sometimes take payments in order to speed a vehicle through the checkpoint. We began cracking down on this during Spring of 2006. There are also kickbacks with contractors—this is very typical and also very accepted.

Mr. SANTORUM. I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.

FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, AND IRAQ

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I came to the Capitol yesterday on the fifth anniversary of September 11. I looked out the window, down the Mall on the west side, and I couldn't help but remember what we saw on 9/11. On that morning as we met in a small room on the west side of the Capitol and watched the television broadcast and first heard of a plane crashing into the World Trade Center, I thought: What a freak accident. I hope a lot of people won't die.

Then as we watched incredulously, a second plane hit the World Trade Center. The scales fell from our eyes and we knew exactly what was happening. This was no accident. This was intentional. America was under attack.

We met in this meeting a few minutes longer. Someone walked into the room and said they were evacuating the White House. We looked down the Mall on 9/11 and saw black, billowing smoke, and then the word came across that there was some explosion at the Pentagon. We weren't sure what had happened. A bomb? It turned out it was a plane.

As that black smoke billowed across the Mall, as we looked on that bright sunlit day at this horrible, disgusting display of destruction, we were told to evacuate this building, to leave the U.S. Capitol for our lives as quickly as we could.

We raced down the steps, all of us, thousands of us, and gathered outside. We stood on the grass not sure where to turn or where to go. We heard a loud boom. Many of us thought it was another explosion. It turned out it was the scrambling of our fighter planes over the Nation's Capital to protect us.

Finally, after dismissing our staff, telling them to go home and find a safe place, I walked a few blocks away from the Capitol Building and sat, as most Americans did, for the rest of the day hearing the news reports, watching the television scenes from New York.

Then late that evening, after that wrenching day, Members of Congress gathered on the steps outside the Capitol in a rare, heartening display of bipartisanship or nonpartisanship, said a prayer, and sang "God Bless America."

In the weeks that followed, there was a mood on Capitol Hill unlike anything

we had seen for a long time. The President came to us within hours and said: We are now declaring war on those responsible for 9/11. He proposed that we mobilize the strength of America, all of us, and strike back at those who had killed 3,000 innocent people on that day. The President's plea was answered with unequivocal support on both sides of the aisle.

I have often said that in the years I have served here, there is no more difficult vote than a vote to go to war. We know that with that vote, people will die. The enemy, brave Americans, and innocent people will die, and you must take that seriously. But I didn't hesitate to vote for that war against al-Qaida. I didn't hesitate to vote for that war in Afghanistan. America had to stand and defend itself against those who would kill innocent people, as they did on 9/11.

Yesterday, on the fifth anniversary of 9/11, there was an effort to rekindle that feeling.

The President made important visits to New York, to the site of the World Trade Center, to Pennsylvania where United flight 93 crashed into the ground when the brave passengers took control of the plane away from the terrorists and, in the process, may have saved my life. Many believe that plane was destined for Washington, destined for this building, this important symbol of America. Those brave passengers took control of that plane and gave their lives in the process. The President visited that rural setting to remember their heroism.

Then he came to the Pentagon, and I was honored to join him as he laid a wreath at the corner of the new section of the Pentagon that was rebuilt after 184 people in that building died on 9/11.

We gathered again on the steps yesterday, a bipartisan gathering of the House and Senate, for a moment of prayer, a moment of reflection, and to sing "God Bless America." It was a time when we tried to recapture that spirit of unity, that spirit of determination, and many of us felt we were moving our Nation again in the right direction.

But what is it that divides us? We heard the speech of my leader and friend, Senator HARRY REID of Nevada, and the speech of the Senator from Pennsylvania, again at odds in debating about our policy. What divides us is clearly another war—not the war in Afghanistan but the war in Iraq. Twenty-three of us on the floor of this Senate, when given a chance, voted against the authorization of force to go to war in Iraq.

As a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, I knew from closed door sessions, which I was sworn not to disclose, I knew from those sessions that many of the things that were being told to the American people as reasons to go to war against Saddam Hussein and Iraq were just plain wrong.

This last week, the Senate Intelligence Committee, in a bipartisan report, made it public for the record, for

history, for all to see, that the American people were misled into this war in Iraq—statements about weapons of mass destruction that didn't exist, statements about nuclear weapons that didn't exist, statements about connections between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaida which were fabricated. Those reasons were told to the American people to justify a war which is now in its fourth year.

Unlike the war in Afghanistan where our mission was clear to go after those who were responsible for 9/11, to go after al-Qaida, in Iraq we are in our fourth year. The official report from the Pentagon this morning is 2,671 of our best and bravest soldiers have died in that war; more than 19,000 have returned wounded, serious wounds—amputations, blindness, burns, traumatic brain injury. We have spent more than \$320 billion on that war. And last night, as the President spoke to America, he went beyond that spirit of unity that brought us together for the war in Afghanistan and against al-Qaida to discuss this war in Iraq.

It is part of an offensive by this administration. We saw it on Sunday with Condoleezza Rice, our Secretary of State, and with Vice President CHENEY's appearance on television. We saw and heard the statements they made to justify a war in Iraq, a war which, unfortunately, is not going well.

The Senator from Pennsylvania objected to Senator REID saying that we were involved in some sort of sectarian violence in Iraq. Those are not original words of the Senator from Nevada. He made reference to the General Accountability Office which released its report yesterday in which it said:

Iraq's political process has sharpened the country's sectarian divisions, polarized relations between its ethnic and religious groups, and weakened its sense of national identity.

The Senator from Pennsylvania criticized the Democratic leader for being political and partisan in saying these words. But the same words were used by the General Accountability Office. It is a fact. We can't ignore it. The situation in Iraq has worsened.

Mr. President, do you know what the GAO reported in terms of violence in Iraq? The figures are startling. I read the report:

The Pentagon said enemy attacks against coalition and Iraqi forces increased by 23 percent from 2004 to 2005. The number of attacks from January to July 2006 were 57 percent higher than during the same period in 2005.

The GAO published a graph yesterday. The number of attacks rose from around 100 in May of 2003 to roughly 4,500 in July of 2006. Is it political or partisan to note the obvious, the GAO report to which Senator REID made reference? That is not political partisanship; that is a reality, and we should face that reality because Iraq does continue to slip into civil war despite the billions that we have spent and the thousands of American lives which have been lost in that battle.

There is another political reality. Osama bin Laden is still on the loose. Al-Qaida's membership, estimated at 20,000 on 9/11, is now estimated by our intelligence agencies at 50,000. Instead of shrinking and disappearing, they are growing geometrically.

And there is another reality. The Taliban is gaining ground again in Afghanistan. They have set up shop in Pakistan where that Government has agreed to have a safe haven for some of these terrorist forces. That is unfortunate, and it is disastrous when you think of our long-term war on terrorism.

Sitting at home in Springfield, IL, over the weekend, I listened to Vice President CHENEY when he appeared on "Meet the Press." He said that those of us who make these speeches about the reality of the war in Iraq are not showing the kind of resolve that we should. We are somehow validating terrorism. We are weakening America's efforts to fight terrorism.

I couldn't disagree more. If Members of Congress—if the American public cannot stand up and speak when they disagree with the policies of this administration, we have lost sight of the values of this democracy and how important they are. Despite the Intelligence Committee's disclosure of how we were misled into the war in Iraq, and despite the situation on the ground today, when Vice President CHENEY says he would do it all again, it is a reminder that this administration is resolute in continuing on a path that does not make us safer and, in fact, endangers our troops even as we stand and speak today. It strikes me as odd that this Vice President, after the Intelligence Committee report, did not show even a hint of embarrassment for some of the things he said before the invasion of Iraq and not even a word of regret for misleading the American people.

Well, we have a different vision. We believe there are things we can do to make America safe and strong. Let's take the 9/11 Commission report. Let's take their recommendations and make them reality—100 percent of them. Instead of a failing grade, let's have an A+ so that America can take these recommendations and move forward.

The budget of the Bush administration has continued to cut these recommendations, has refused to fund the things that will make us safer, whether it is a stronger National Guard, a better communications system, stronger port facilities, more surveillance and security of chemical plants and nuclear powerplants, better security on Amtrak, on mass transit—these are things the Democrats on this side of the aisle believe should be our highest priority in making America safe.

We need to strengthen our ports and our nuclear powerplants in my State and across the Nation. We need to cut our dependence on foreign oil so that we aren't indirectly subsidizing terrorism and indirectly subsidizing those

who are killing our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. And we need to push to change course in Iraq. We need a responsible redeployment of troops so that the Iraqis understand this is their battle, this is their war, this is their country. There has to come a time, in this fourth year of a war that has lasted longer than the Korean war, when the Iraqis stand and fight for their own country, when American troops are replaced and can come home.

Last week, the administration sent 5,000 more troops to Iraq. There is no end in sight. The President said we must stay the course. I think we need to change the course. We need to start the redeployment of American troops—not precipitous, immediate withdrawal; that would be wrong, but to start the redeployment of American troops so the Iraqis stand and fight for their own nation, so that our troops, having served us so well and so honorably, can come home safely.

The sad reality in Afghanistan is if we don't put more force in place there, we are not going to see the results for which we fought for so long. Afghanistan is tough territory. Many have learned that. The British Empire learned it. The Soviet Union learned it as well. If we are not going to become victims of the same fate, we need to make certain that our commitment to NATO and Afghanistan is real. That is part of the war on terrorism.

The Senator from Pennsylvania said of Senator REID that he didn't take our opponents seriously. The Senator from Pennsylvania is wrong. Senator REID understands terrorism, as we all do. He understands that we need to stand together, on a bipartisan basis, to make America safe and to fight the right war in the right place, to win a victory that counts. That is why he spoke today. We should never forget, according to the Senator from Pennsylvania, that we are fighting an enemy that wants to die. He said that has never happened before.

I think a brief study of history would tell him it has. The Japanese Kamikaze fliers had the same death wish as those who are suicide bombers today. It has happened before. It doesn't make it any less of a threat, but the fact is, we have faced it before and we have overcome it.

It is interesting that as we listen to our military experts, they tell us we cannot win in Iraq militarily no matter how many troops we put in place; we have to win politically. We have to stop and reflect on the fact that there is a large swath of this world that doesn't understand who we are and what we stand for. They continually are told the wrong thing about America. They continue to be misled. So as we are strong militarily, as we must be, as we must defend America at home, we must also reach out and spread the word about what America's values are, what we are willing to stand for, so that we are better understood in this world and so that this new

generation, looking for an impression of the United States, doesn't come up with the wrong impression.

As we consider what we face today in the closing weeks of this session, let's make sure we do stand together in a bipartisan fashion for defending America as our homeland. Let's put the resources in place to make us safer. We continue to stand behind our troops, but let us not be so bull-headed that we won't consider any change in tactic or strategy that might start to bring our troops home safely, with their mission truly accomplished this time, and let's not give up on Afghanistan. We cannot allow the Taliban to have a resurgence of power and give al-Qaida another place to gather forces to launch against the world. That is our mission. That is our responsibility.

As we gathered yesterday, it was a reminder that at one time not that long ago we stood together in that effort.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

SECURITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EVERY PORT ACT

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 4954, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4954) to improve maritime and cargo security through enhanced layered defenses, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Stevens (for DEMINT) amendment No. 4921, to establish a unified national hazard alert system.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, is the pending business the DeMint amendment?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Yes, it is.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 4929

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside, and I send an amendment to the desk.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Washington [Mrs. MURRAY] proposes an amendment numbered 4929.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 4929

(Purpose: To extend the merchandise processing fees, and for other purposes)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ COBRA FEES.

(a) EXTENSION OF FEES.—Subparagraphs (A) and (B)(i) of section 13031(j)(3) of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (19 U.S.C. 58c(j)(3)(A) and (B)(i)) are amended by striking “2014” each place it appears and inserting “2015”.

(b) USE OF FEES.—Paragraph (2) of section 13031(f) of such Act (19 U.S.C. 58c(f)(2)) is amended by adding at the end the following: “The provisions of the first and second sentences of this paragraph limiting the purposes for which amounts in the Customs User Fee Account may be made available shall not apply with respect to amounts in that Account during fiscal year 2015.”.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, this morning the Senate is considering a very important bill, the port security bill, which many Members have come to the floor to talk about. I am proud to be an original sponsor of this bill and have been working on it for a number of years; in fact, since five years ago, after September 11, when I was the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee chair. At that time I began to bring stakeholders together to talk about how we can make sure the cargo containers that are coming into this country are secure. It is a very complex issue. It is very difficult to do. We have a tremendous balancing act of making sure that cargo containers are safe when they come into our ports but also that we don't halt our economy as we move forward with this initiative.

I have been very proud to work with a number of Senators in getting us to this point, and I am hoping this bill will move forward in an expeditious manner. Obviously, there will be a number of amendments that come before us, and I look forward to working with other Senators on both sides of the aisle to move them forward.

The bill that is now before the Senate has one major hole. The original bill we have been working on with all of the committees contained a funding source for this bill that some Members had some concerns about. The original bill that we offered had tariff fees as the funding source. The Finance Committee has objected to that. They were

concerned about that. I understand that concern. Because of that objection, the bill that has come before us is an important bill, but it lacks the ability to put in place a secure system. It is essentially an empty shell without a funding source.

That is why I have sent to the desk right now an amendment we have been working on together with a number of people to make sure this bill is not just about rhetoric but actually has the funding behind it. If we pass this bill without funding it, we will not have done our job. The amendment I sent to the desk extends two existing Customs user fees for 1 year to fund this bill. Those are fees that are collected today that are going to expire, and all we are doing is extending the collection for an additional year.

The fees we are extending are the merchandise processing fee and the passenger conveyance fee. Extending those for just 1 year will produce close to \$2.5 billion in revenue and will importantly provide a dedicated funding stream to pay for the new security initiatives authorized in this bill. By voting for this amendment, this Senate will put money behind the rhetoric of port security. This Senate will put money behind the rhetoric. That is absolutely critical in today's world.

I sit on the Appropriations Committee. I sit on the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee. If we do not put a dedicated source of funding behind this bill, we will simply put port security in contention with all of the other functions of the Department of Homeland Security. We will be looking at Coast Guard money, FBI money, all of the important functions that we need to have within this bill, and port security will be just another issue that doesn't get funded. That is why this funding amendment is so absolutely critical.

The funding for this amendment is going to be used to hire new Customs and Border Protection officers. We can't just simply require our Customs and border officials to do more. They are important positions. Their eyes on the containers and their eyes on the tracking, their eyes on the containers as they are loaded and secured is absolutely critical. Without putting new Customs and Border Patrol agents in place to do the functions we are asking for in this bill, we simply will be sending an empty promise to America.

The funding also will improve the tracking and data collection of every container coming into our ports. That is essential funding which will make sure what we put into those containers is sealed, that someone is watching to make sure they haven't been tampered with, that no one has gotten into them, and that those containers have not gone someplace they are not supposed to. Just putting a tracking seal on it isn't going to make sure we know a container has not been tampered with. We need the personnel in place to do